DR. ERNST A. BESSEY, of the Louisiana State University, has accepted the professorship of botany in the Michigan Agricultural College, to succeed Dr. W. J. Beal, who has resigned.

MR. ROBERT H. BAKER, assistant at Allegheny Observatory, has been elected assistant professor of astronomy at Brown University.

EDMUND H. HOLLANDS, Ph.D. (Cornell), has been appointed professor of philosophy in Butler College, Indianapolis. Dr. Hollands has been instructor in philosophy at Cornell University and during this year has been acting professor of philosophy at Hamilton College.

A NEW department of botany and forestry has been established in the University of Montana. Dr. J. E. Kirkwood has been advanced to the position of professor in charge.

MR. J. W. EGGLESTON, assistant in geology, Harvard University, has been appointed assistant professor of geology and mineralogy at the School of Mines and Metallurgy at Rolla, Mo.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

THE RELIABILITY OF "MARKS"

IN connection with the comparison of marks assigned by different examiners in astronomy, published in SCIENCE for May 27, a somewhat different experiment of my own in philosophy may be of interest. The course in question was based on Eucken's "Problem of Human Life," and the class consisted of seventeen young women. For each exercise some fifteen pages of the text were assigned, and the students came prepared to make a ten-minute written summary of it. The object, of course, was to see that they did the work, and every student present handed in a paper, even though it contained nothing but her name. The students themselves took turns in marking these papers. It was understood that I was to revise the marks; but, as it turned out, this was not necessary. There were also four tests of an hour each. I was myself to read the papers from these, but actually only read three of them. These tests were announced at the beginning of the year, and the students knew when to expect them. I paid no attention to the marks handed in from time to time by student-markers until the end of the year, at which time I also read and marked the papers from the three hour-tests. These hour-tests, scattered throughout the term, took the place of a final examination.

The marks given by students were computed as follows: The marker for the day marked the papers excellent, good, fair, passable or deficient, with or without a qualifying plus or minus. From these I determined each student's distance above or below the middle of the class, and marked her anywhere from +8 to −8 accordingly. I did not count the mark which the marker gave herself. The fourth column shows the algebraic sum of these marks; the bracketed figure showing the number of separate marks which are added together to make this total. The first column shows the student's standing in the hour-tests, marked by me; and the third shows the figures from which this standing is derived. These figures were actually obtained by assigning numerical values to my own marks of E, G, F, etc., and then multiplying the totals scored in a given test by the fraction necessary to make the highest marks scored in the three different tests equal. My marks were given rather roughly and were not revised.

My Order	Their Order	My Score	Their Score
No. 1	No. 2	78	+63.5 (12)
" 2	" 15	77	−35.5 (11)
" 3	" 8	70[1]	− 2 (10)
" 4	" 1	67	+66 (12)
" 5	" 3	64	+28.5 (11)
" 6	" 6	61	+19.5 (10)
" 7	" 5	58	+28.5 (12)
" 8	" 10	56	−11 (12)
" 9	" 9	55	− 9 (11)
" 10	" 12	51	−26.5 (13)
" 11	" 11	50	−17 (12)
" 12	" 4	47	+30.5 (12)
" 13	" 13	45	−35 (12)
" 14	" 7	44	+18 (12)
" 15	" 14	36	−27 (9)
" 16	" 17	30[1]	−49.5 (11)
" 17	" 16	23	−41.5 (10)

[1] Computed from the results of two tests by adding 50 per cent. to the total.

It will be noticed that the positions assigned by the students of Nos. 2, 3, 12 and 14 differ considerably from those assigned by me. But if these students were omitted from the table altogether the relative positions assigned to the other thirteen by the students themselves on the strength of the ten-minute tests would always come within one place of that assigned by me on the strength of the hour-tests. Nos. 2 and 3, who stand high with me but low with their classmates, impressed me during the term as distinctly intelligent and appreciative. They did much to make the class interesting. But they did not take the daily tests seriously. No. 2 handed in four blank papers, and No. 3 handed in three. They were also absent oftener than any one else in the class, though this did not count in their scores. The papers handed to me by Nos. 12 and 14 were marked low (as I discover on looking at them again) mainly because their treatment of the more comprehensive questions was slight and rather undiscriminating. Their classmates tell me that these two students always learned their daily summaries by heart. Nos. 1 and 4, who stand so far above the others in the students' score, were undoubtedly the most reliable students in the class.

The conclusions which I am disposed to draw from the experiment are that both I and my students can give juster marks than I had dared to hope, but that in my occasional examinations intelligence counts for more than persistent industry, while the reverse is true with short daily tests marked by students.

I may add that the young women were very glad to undertake this work of marking the papers, though they grew tired of the writing. Another year I should probably vary the summaries with questions.

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WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY,
June 7, 1910

AN UNUSUAL NESTING SITE OF THE MOCKING BIRD

THE nest of the mocking bird, *Mimus polyglottus* Boie, is usually built in hedges, thickets or low bushes. At Thompson's Mills, north Georgia, where this bird is very common, solitary thorn bushes found everywhere in pastures in this locality are favorite nesting sites. The nest is usually placed five or six feet from the ground. It is a rather bulky structure of twigs, stems and weeds, with an abundant lining of fine roots, etc. In early May, 1910, the writer found a mocking bird's nest placed in a rather unusual situation at Thompson's Mills, north Georgia.

This nest was placed about five feet from the ground at the bottom of a roomy hollow in a large, dead tree standing in a pasture. Two round entrances on opposite sides of the trunk led down to the nest, so that the sitting bird could readily escape from the back or front door. The nest, which was constructed of the usual materials, was situated about six inches below these lateral openings and contained four eggs. Although mocking birds very rarely utilize hollow trees for nesting sites, it is evident that a nest placed like the one described has many advantages. It is perfectly sheltered from severe weather, and receives the usual amount of illumination in keeping with a mocking bird's nesting instincts.

Records of mocking birds nesting in hollow trees are very rare. Oliver Davie in "Nests and Eggs of North American Birds," mentions a single instance where a mocking bird's nest was found in a hollow of a live-oak tree in 1898.

In a study of the nesting habits of birds it soon becomes evident that the nesting sites and material chosen show more or less adaptation to local conditions. Strong hereditary trends of habit are characteristic of the different species of birds, but a visible expression of some of these must depend upon the limitations of environment. It occasionally happens that some individuals among birds seem to have lost entirely the normal nesting instincts of their kind, but such instances have no ready explanation.

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